

## SSUDAC Meeting Summary June 20, 2013

**Members Present:** Ernest Bland, Dan Figueroa, Don Hague, Ed Levy, Jon Lourie, Melvin Tull, Yuri van Mierlo

**Members Absent:** Carmen Camacho, Jessica Evans

### **Call to Order and Introductions:**

- Mr. Ernest Bland, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:29 p.m.
- Committee member Don Hague motioned to approve last month's meeting summary (for the record). Yuri van Mierlo seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
- Mr. Bland referenced an email he had written regarding zoning text amendments at Fenton Village. Ed Levy proposed a motion to send a letter of support for the zoning amendment to the County Council. Dan Figueroa seconded. The motion passed, with 5 in favor and 2 opposed (Mel Tull and Yuri van Mierlo).

### **Reports:**

#### **Pilot Project For Parking Garage Ads**

Xavius daSilva-Thompson, Montgomery County Parking Lot District

- Mr. daSilva-Thompson presented the details of the pilot phase of a new program to install ads in public County garages. The County is working directly with RMR Associates, a marketing consulting group. The goal of the pilot program is to ascertain current and future demand for garage ads, the best practices for implementation, and estimate revenue potential in parking garages and lots in both Silver Spring and Bethesda.
- The garage advertising pilot program was implemented due to public requests made to the County Council. Focus groups were utilized before the start of the pilot program.
- The pilot program is currently scheduled for a 6-8 month run in Garage 61 on Ellsworth Dr., Garage 7 on Cameron St., (in Silver Spring) Garage 57 on Bethesda Ave., and Garage 11 on Woodmont Ave. (in Bethesda).
- The pilot program was launched on June 1, 2013, with ads specifically installed to inform the public of the opportunity to advertise. The content of these ads focuses on retention rate, performance, and word of mouth.
- Upon expiration of the pilot program, RMR Associates will draft a performance upgrade and issue a report regarding the success of the

pilot and if the ad program should expand to more garages and lots throughout the County.

- All revenue will go directly to each area's respective Parking Lot District.
- The advertising program will initially start with ads from small and local businesses, with an eventual goal of expanding to include large national chains.
- A total of 32 pilot spaces are available within the Silver Spring garages (21 in Garage 7 and 11 in Garage 61). A total of 22 spaces are being offered in the Bethesda garages.
- Ad sizes range from 2'x4' up to 9'x13', with ad installation packages of 3, 6, or 8 months.
- Ad prices range from \$1,100-\$4,000 per month, with 3 pricing tiers.
- Committee member Ed Levy asked about the actual appearance and structure of the ads. The ads will appear within backlit enclosures and be placed behind graffiti-resistant glass.
- Ads will be installed at garage exit and entrance points and within elevators and stairwells.
- Mr. Bland asked about the role of the County as it pertains to its partnership with RMR Associates. Mr. daSilva-Thompson stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) will determine the types of signage that can be used, with RMR Associates acting as a consultant. RMR will follow County instruction and utilize County contractors for ad installation during the pilot program.
- Committee members asked about "smart-targeted" and "electronic rotating ads." Mr. Kerry of RMR Associates responded that feedback from the pilot program will be used to make any changes or incorporate additional types of ads as requested, as well as determining the demand and cost efficiency of such ads.
- Committee member Dan Figueroa suggested that incorporating national ads with discounted local ads could supplement revenue to fund more high-tech ads.
- Mr. Bland asked how the success of the program would be measured. Mr. Kerry responded that RMR would be doing direct surveys within the garages, as well as gathering data from QR codes located on the ads.
- Committee member Jon Lourie asked about the visibility of the ads from the exterior of the garages. Mr. daSilva-Thompson said that the ads will

only be visible from within the garages and will be positioned unobtrusively.

- The County would receive free a limited amount of free ad spaces if the pilot program is expanded fully.
- The pilot program will first be tested within County garages. If the program is successful, it will be expanded to parking lots.

#### **New Business:**

Mr. Richard Romer, Councilwoman Valerie Ervin's Office

Mr. Romer briefly updated the committee on a number of issues, including:

- Mr. Romer confirmed that all revenue from the parking garage ad program will remain within the specific Parking Lot District where collected.
- The County Executive and County Council have approved the FY 14 budget.
- The County Council is currently working on a zoning code rewrite, including master plan changes for the Long Branch area.
- Committee member Mel Tull asked if current revenue was ahead of what was projected in the budget. Mr. Romer replied that revenue projections were positive before the FY 14 budget passed.

#### **United Therapeutics Redevelopment**

Mr. Avi Halpert and committee member Yuri van Mierlo presented the proposal for the United Therapeutics redevelopment plan:

- United Therapeutics has entered into an agreement with the County to purchase Garage 21 (located at Spring St. & Colesville Rd.). The existing garage will be demolished and a new employee garage will be built in its place.
- The garage roof will feature a private green space for employees of United Therapeutics to use.
- The new building will be a net zero building, with all energy needed to run the building produced by internal thermal pools, utilization of natural ventilation and solar arrays and awnings.
- The redevelopment will be an overall expansion of the campus with more indoor connections between buildings.
- No zoning changes are required for construction.

- Natural ventilation, including a central open space for channeling breezes and thermal pools, will be used for temperature regulation.
- Various streetscape improvements are included in the plan, plus a communal biowall plaza and increased street lighting.
- There will be no height increases on the property, and the new building will be comprised of four office floors and two floors of retail.
- United Therapeutics will be implementing a new shared trash and recycling collection plan with the adjacent Hilton Hotel to increase pickup frequency.
- Initial demolition is set to begin in April of 2015, with a tentative 22 month construction period culminating at the end of 2016 or early 2017.
- A restaurant is planned for a portion of the retail space in the building, but the retail tenant must also adopt the net zero energy plan.
- Committee member Jon Lourie asked if United Therapeutics plans to redevelop any of its properties in the area. Mr. Halpert indicated that they were moving tenants out of two of their recently purchased buildings (1109 Spring St. and 8830 Spring St.) with plans for United Therapeutics to ultimately occupy. Additional construction work is also being done to increase the size of the building at 1015 Spring St.
- Committee member Jon Lourie proposed a motion to write a letter of support for the United Therapeutics redevelopment project, with Dan Figueroa seconding. The motion passed, with seven in favor and one abstaining (Yuri van Mierlo).

#### Urban District Report

Ms. Yvette Freeman, Chief of Operations, Silver Spring Urban District

- Ruppert Landscape will begin planting flowers in the medians along Georgia Ave. and Colesville Rd. Tree pruning work will also be initiated.
- A Capital Bikeshare meeting will be held at the Silver Spring Urban District on Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. The program is an expansion of the existing DC Bikeshare program. There will be 15 Bikesharing stations installed throughout Silver Spring and Takoma Park.
- A few “Big Belly” trash compactors have been ordered. The solar powered units will be installed at Veterans Plaza and near the Transit Center.
- Funds to purchase additional Victor Stanley trash and recycling receptacles have been approved in the FY 14 budget.

- Core drilling for utility work will be done at the intersection of Cameron St. and Georgia Ave. for construction at 8711 Georgia Ave.
- Ms. Freeman met with Silver Spring's new County inspector and made her aware of various outstanding construction and streetscape safety issues within the downtown area.
- The trees along Georgia Ave. at Fenton Village were reported by two County arborists as being in a state of decline. The trees have been removed and will eventually be replaced.
- Ms. Freeman shared photos of recent graffiti vandalism done at Mayors Ln. and other downtown locations. She discussed the challenges of its removal noting that most of the vandalism occurs at night, and that there is a delay in removing graffiti from private property, as the property owner must sign a waiver before SSUD staff can painting or power wash.
- Ms. Freeman also said that local police have asked area merchants to position their surveillance cameras at previously tagged graffiti spots.
- Mr. Reemberto Rodriguez mentioned an area on Georgia Ave. in the Montgomery Hills area that had been tagged with an MS13 gang tag.

#### Silver Spring Regional Area Director's Report

Mr. Reemberto Rodriguez, Director, Silver Spring Regional Center

- Mr. Rodriguez mentioned the [silverspringud@gmail.com](mailto:silverspringud@gmail.com) email address as a way to share photos of issues that need to be addressed in the downtown area, including graffiti, construction and roadwork issues and general area maintenance.
- The AFI Silver Theater will be running their AFI Docs documentary series through June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.
- Downtown Silver Spring was listed as the preferred place to stay for out of town visitors in the area for a recent University of Maryland event.
- The "Craft for Community" event hosted by local merchants on Bonifant St. will be held from 4:00-7:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.
- The "Silver Spring Swings" summer concert series at Veterans Plaza will begin in July and run every Thursday within the month.
- The County will be holding a public forum on the Capital Improvement Project on Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013.
- Ms. Freeman, Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Bland conducted interviews on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to fill a vacant citizen member slot on the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee.

- The Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee is considering their annual retreat for August 2013.

#### New Business

- Committee members discussed the Fillmore concert venue and its impact on merchant revenue in the area.
- Committee member Jon Lourie expressed concerns about the closure of the remaining U.S. Post Office in Silver Spring, and proposed that the committee explore ways to address the issue. Mr. Lourie suggested that the committee extend an invitation to the local postmaster for the July SSUDAC meeting.
- Committee member Mel Tull mentioned the State Highway Administration resurfacing of Georgia Ave. through 16<sup>th</sup> St., and suggested that an SHA rep should be invited to the July SSUDAC meeting. Ms. Freeman confirmed that she had invited them to attend the meeting and that they are tentatively on next month's agenda.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.